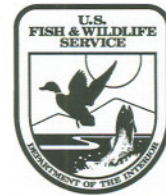




United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Arcata Fish and Wildlife Office

1655 Heindon Road

Arcata, CA 95521-5582

Phone: (707) 822-7201 Fax: (707) 822-8411

In Reply Refer To:

DEC 15 2004

Mr. Doug Bosco
Chair
California Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, 11th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612-2530

Subject: North Coast Regional Land Trust Proposal to the California Coastal Conservancy for acquisition and restoration of property along Freshwater Slough in the City of Eureka, Humboldt County, California.

Dear Mr. Bosco:

We are writing in support of a proposal submitted by the North Coast Regional Land Trust (NCRLT) to the California Coastal Conservancy for acquisition and restoration of a 54 acre parcel along Freshwater Slough within the City of Eureka. The proposal requests funds to acquire the parcel which includes a tidally influenced reach of the creek near Humboldt Bay. The NCRLT will also develop a long-term management plan to guide future activities on the land. The California Department of Fish and Game, the current landowner, and a private consulting firm have developed designs for a proposed 35 acre estuarine wetland restoration project on the property once it is acquired.

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) supports efforts to restore declining species through habitat restoration and recognizes the critical importance of estuaries to a diverse assemblage of fish and wildlife around Humboldt Bay. If funded, we expect this proposal will provide improved estuary habitat for Federally listed fish including steelhead, coho salmon, Chinook salmon and tidewater goby. Other species of interest to the Service in this area include migratory songbirds, waterfowl, shorebirds, birds of prey and amphibians.

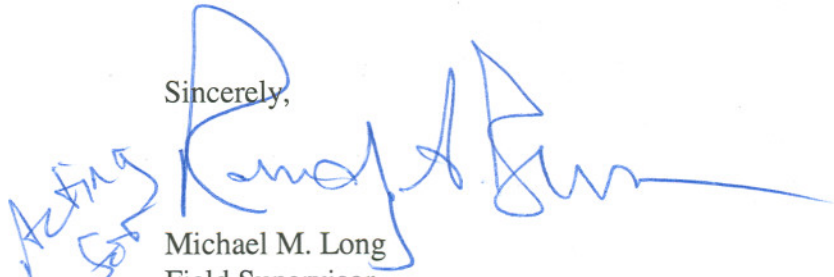
The Service promotes voluntary partnerships with landowners and agencies to improve habitat function for fish and wildlife through several funding programs. Restoration staff of the Arcata Fish and Wildlife Office will be available to work with NCRLT and other agencies at developing future projects for funding on the property when interest and opportunities arise.

Mr. Doug Bosco

Streams and associated marshes around Humboldt Bay have been degraded over the years yet their importance to a diversity of fish and wildlife remains critical. This proposal is a needed step to building on the estuary restoration process locally. We support the development of a long-term management plan and look forward to the opportunity of providing expertise and input to the process.

If you have any questions, please contact Paula Golightly, of my staff, at 707-822-7201.

Sincerely,

Acting

Michael M. Long
Field Supervisor

cc:

Northcoast Regional Land Trust, Bayside, CA (Attn: Shayne Green)
FWS, Humboldt Bay NWR, Loleta, (Attn: Eric T. Nelson)
CDFG, Eureka, (Attn: Karen Kovacs)

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DEC 16 2004

COASTAL CONSERVANCY
OAKLAND, CALIF.

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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

825 5TH STREET

EUREKA, CALIFORNIA 95501-1153 PHONE (707) 476-2390 FAX (707) 445-7299

November 30, 2004

Doug Bosco, Chair
California Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, 11th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612-2530

**RE: Northcoast Regional Land Trust (NRLT) - Purchase of Freshwater Farms Parcel and
Development of a Long-Term Management Plan for the Property**

Dear Chairman Bosco:

As Humboldt County's 3rd District Supervisor, I am pleased to submit this letter in support of Northcoast Regional Land Trust's purchase of the Freshwater Farms parcel. This parcel is part of an effort I have supported within my District for sometime.

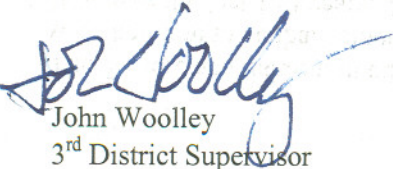
The 54 acre acquisition, in addition to protecting existing estuary and bottomlands habitat along lower Freshwater Creek, will facilitate the enhancement of important estuary habitat which has been severely degraded around much of Humboldt Bay over the last 150 years. Such habitat, including the plant and animal life it harbors, is vital to a healthy and diverse Bay ecosystem.

The property and the long-term plan for its restoration have many noteworthy elements, including:

- The property borders nearly ½ mile of the Freshwater Creek estuary, which according to recent sampling data is utilized by coho and Chinook salmon, steelhead trout, sea-run cutthroat trout, and numerous other fish and wildlife species.
- The property has the potential to provide *estuarine backwater channel habitat* in a watershed where the virtual absence of such habitat is understood to be a primary limiting factor for salmon populations.
- The project is consistent with the restoration goals outlined in the *Draft Humboldt Bay Watershed Salmon and Steelhead Conservation Plan (2004)*, written by Redwood Community Action Agency in collaboration with the Humboldt Bay Watershed Advisory Committee.
- The project area is highly visible from a well-traveled county road connecting two of the larger towns in the region, making it a prime location for a model project and providing opportunities for community outreach, education, and possibly recreation.

The lasting benefits of this project to wildlife and the people of California will be significant. I support the Coastal Conservancy Board's approval for full funding for the acquisition of the Freshwater Farms parcel, including funds for the development of a Management Plan to ensure that natural resource values will be protected and restored on the property to the extent feasible. Thank you for your consideration in this matter. Should you have any questions please contact me at 707-476-2393.

Sincerely,


John Woolley
3rd District Supervisor

JW/kr

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DEC 06 2004

**COASTAL CONSERVANCY
OAKLAND, CALIF.**



Redwood Community Action Agency

Bowen

Simpson-Vance House 1892

Doug Bosco, Chair
California Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, 11th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612-2530

December 13, 2004

Dear Mr. Bosco,

Redwood Community Action Agency (RCAA) enthusiastically supports the proposed acquisition of the 54-acre Freshwater Farms parcel by the Northcoast Regional Land Trust. RCAA has worked to restore fisheries habitat in Freshwater Creek for over 20 years. In the past two years we have worked with Mr. Rick Storre of Freshwater Farms and staff of McBain and Trush to develop an estuary restoration plan for this property. In addition to protecting existing estuary and bottomlands habitat along lower Freshwater Creek, this acquisition will facilitate the enhancement of important estuary habitat. This project ties directly to the recommendations of the State Coho Recovery Strategy. The property and the long-term plan for its restoration have many noteworthy elements, including:

- The property borders the Freshwater Creek estuary, which is utilized by coho and Chinook salmon to allow them to adjust to salt water before migrating to the ocean.
- The property has the potential to provide *estuarine backwater channel habitat* in a watershed where the virtual absence of such habitat is understood to be a primary limiting factor for salmon populations.
- Estuary restoration is a primary goal of the *Draft Humboldt Bay Watershed Salmon and Steelhead Conservation Plan* (2004), written by Redwood Community Action Agency in collaboration with the Humboldt Bay Watershed Advisory Committee.
- NRLT will explore collaborative relationships with the Freshwater Farms wetland nursery and potentially other practitioners in an effort to support the economy of Humboldt County and wetlands restoration projects across the region.
- The project area is highly visible from a well-traveled county road connecting two of the larger town in the region, making it a prime location for a model project and providing opportunities for community outreach, education, and possibly recreation.

RCAA's Natural Resources Services Division is currently funded by the Department of Fish and Game to function as the watershed coordinator for Humboldt Bay. As such we have been, and will stay, involved with this project, providing technical assistance as needed. The lasting benefits of this project to wildlife and the people of California will be significant. I encourage the Coastal Conservancy Board to approve full funding for the acquisition, including funds for the development of a Management Plan to ensure that natural resource values will be protected and restored on the property to the extent feasible.

Sincerely,

Ruth Blyther, Program Director
Natural Resources Services
Redwood Community Action Agency

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DEC 20 2004

COASTAL CONSERVANCY
OAKLAND, CALIF.



P.O. Box 663, Arcata, CA 95518 • 824 L Street, Studio 5, Arcata, CA 95521
Phone: (707)826-7794 • Fax: (707)826-7795

December 14, 2004

Doug Bosco, Chair
California Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, 11th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612-2530

RE: Proposal for funds enabling the Northcoast Regional Land Trust (NRLT) to purchase the Freshwater Farms parcel and develop a long-term Management Plan for the property.

Dear Mr. Doug Bosco,

I am writing on behalf of McBain and Trush to support the proposed acquisition of the 54-acre Freshwater Farms parcel by the Northcoast Regional Land Trust. The Freshwater Farms project presents an opportunity for the state to recover one of the most endangered portions of a watershed- the estuary. Humboldt Bay has suffered a dramatic decline in salt water marsh habitats, over 90% since the turn of the 20th century. Freshwater Farms is one of the few locations around Humboldt Bay where there is an opportunity to restore tidal action and increase salt marsh area.

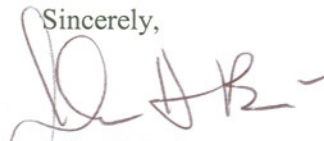
You may be aware of efforts in recent years to work with land managers upstream of the estuary to develop a comprehensive watershed assessment ensuring the long term integrity of Coho and Chinook salmon within the Freshwater Creek watershed. That watershed assessment focused on headwater and low gradient reaches and did not include the estuary. The proposed acquisition and estuary rehabilitation are important cornerstones to maintaining the integrity of the Freshwater Creek Watershed.

Estuaries are important for several reasons. Coho and Chinook fish utilize them for both feeding and regulating body salinity before going to sea or returning to spawn. Recent work in Coos Bay Oregon, and Humboldt Bay has highlighted the importance of estuaries to the survival and successful return of out-migrating anadromous fish. The diversity of salt marsh plant species and productivity are unrivaled in local ecosystems. In short, the estuary is a fundamental part of watershed integrity to the species living within it.

There are few locations around Humboldt Bay where tidal inundation can be restored for such little effort and cost. Our field surveys show that removing the wooden tidegate from concrete weir at the lower area of the site and performing a modest amount of earth work would restore tidal inundation, increase juvenile salmonid rearing habitat, increase salt marsh area, increase the potential area where Lyngbye's sedge can grow, and increase drainage of adjacent properties. The costs of the project and land acquisition are low relative to the overwhelming benefit to both the watershed and Humboldt Bay.

This is a significant opportunity to benefit wildlife and the people of California, and should not be lost. We urge the Coastal Conservancy Board's support to approve full funding for the acquisition of the Freshwater Farms parcel, including funds for the development of a Management Plan to ensure that natural resource values will be protected and restored on the property to the extent feasible.

Sincerely,



John H. Bair
Riparian Botanist

Cc: Shayne Green, Northcoast Regional Land Trust

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DEC 24 2004
COASTAL CONSERVANCY
OAKLAND, CALIF.